

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
ACQUISITION TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (ATAP)
POLICY**

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1. REFERENCES

- a. Chapter 87 of Title 10, United States Code.
- b. Department of Defense (DoD) Directive 5000.52, Defense Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Workforce Education, Training, and Career Development Program, January 12, 2005.
- c. DoD Instruction 5000.66, Operation of the Defense Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Workforce Education, Training, and Career Development Program, December 21, 2005.
- d. DoD Directive 5000.57, Defense Acquisition University, October 22, 1991.
- e. DoD Instruction 5000.55, "Reporting Management Information on DoD Military and Civilian Acquisition Personnel and Position," November 1, 1991.
- f. Title 5, Chapter 41, United States Code.
- g. Defense Acquisition University Catalog (current issue).
- h. DA Regulation 690-400, Chapter 410, Training.
- i. Part 410 of Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations.
- j. Memorandum: Enforcement of Mandatory Certification Requirements Relating to Acquisition Workforce and Corps Members, 12 Oct 2006.
- k. Memorandum: Director, Army Acquisition Corps (AAC) Guidance memorandum #1, 22 Dec 06.

2. SCOPE

This Army Acquisition Tuition Assistance Program (ATAP) Policy applies to all civilian Army Acquisition, Logistics and Technology (AL&T) workforce members.

3. BACKGROUND

Title XII of Public Law 101-510, "National Defense Authorization Act for FY 1991, Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA), November 5, 1990," amended the training law, 5. U.S.C., Chapter 41, by providing in 5 U.S.C., Chapter 4107

and Part 410 of Title 5 Code of Federal Regulation; provisions whereby agencies may authorize training leading to an academic degree in occupations of anticipated shortages of qualified personnel. Public Law 108-375, FY05 DoD Authorization Act, amends Section 1745 of Title 10, United States Code, to extend the "shortage of personnel" designation for qualified civilian acquisition personnel of the DoD until September 30, 2010. These policies and procedures implement the ATAP within the Department of the Army (DA).

4. APPLICABILITY

a. The ATAP is available for AL&T workforce members who wish to complete an Associates degree, Bachelors degree, fulfill the business hour requirement cited in reference 1a, or complete a graduate degree in a business-related discipline. In order to apply for ATAP, AL&T workforce members must already be certified at the level required for their current position.

(1) Undergraduate degrees must include 12 or 24 semester hours of business to satisfy the positive business hour requirement for certain career fields and Army Acquisition Corps (AAC) membership. The 12 business hour requirement applies only when the degree obtained is the same discipline as the current job series; i.e., an individual who earned an engineering degree currently works in an engineering position as defined by job series.

(2) ATAP may be used to complete either 12 or 24 semester credit hours (or equivalent) from among the following disciplines: accounting, business finance, law, contracting, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, and organization and management.

(3) Masters funding is also available to those General Service (GS) Level 12 (or equivalent) AL&T workforce members who are currently certified at their required level (at least Level II) interested in pursuing graduate study in a business, scientific, or technical specialty, as cited in reference 1a and as outlined in DoD Directive 5000.52, Section 4.1.6.

b. ATAP is not authorized for education beyond the master's degree level. ATAP funding may only be used for study at accredited colleges or universities within the member's local commuting area; travel funds are not authorized. Classes will be taken during non-duty hours, unless the participant's organization approves class attendance during duty hours.

c. To be eligible for ATAP funding benefits, an applicant must currently be a member of the AL&T workforce. If the applicant is not currently occupying an acquisition position (even if a previous AL&T workforce member), he/she is not entitled to ATAP educational benefits. If the ATAP participant was previously approved for ATAP funding and subsequently moves to a non-acquisition billet, or the encumbered billet is changed to non-acquisition, the ATAP student is no longer eligible for ATAP funding.

d. Approved ATAP funding is subject to availability of budget authority.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

a. The Deputy Director, Acquisition Career Management (DDACM):

(1) Has oversight and control of the ATAP policy and procedures.

(2) Is responsible for the development and management of the programs that provide for the education, training, and career progression of AL&T workforce members.

(3) Serves as final approval authority for employees accepted to participate in the program and provides approved results to the U.S. Army Acquisition Support Center (USAASC) Regional Customer Support Offices (CSOs).

b. The U.S. Army Acquisition Support Center (USAASC):

(1) Develops and issues the ATAP policy and procedures.

(2) Provides oversight of the ATAP.

(3) Manages the ATAP budget and processes all requests for tuition assistance.

(4) Reviews requests for additional funding and time extensions by current students. The ATAP Coordinator and the USAASC Eastern Regional Director approve or deny requests.

(5) Ensures widest dissemination of information on ATAP announcements, information, policy and procedures.

(6) Provides customer assistance on all aspects of ATAP.

(7) Tracks the progress of each ATAP student ensuring that grade requirements in each class ("B" graduate or "C" undergraduate) are maintained and that changes to schedules or funding requirements are approved.

(8) Publishes ATAP announcement on the USAASC website.

(9) Accepts applications for ATAP.

(10) Determines applicant eligibility.

(11) Reviews applicant submissions.

- (12) Plans, organizes and conducts ATAP selection process.
- (13) Provides DDACM with recommended selectee/non-selectee list.
- (14) Notifies selectees/non-selectees of status.
- (15) Publishes approved ATAP results on the USAASC website.

c. Acquisition Career Managers (ACMs):

- (1) Provide customer assistance on all aspects of ATAP.
- (2) Ensure widest dissemination of information on ATAP.

d. ATAP Participants:

(1) Apply for admission to an institution of higher learning that has accreditation recognized by the United States Department of Education. Accreditation information may be found on <http://www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/index.html>.

(2) Submit applications and supporting documentation as outlined in ATAP announcement. Information can be found on the USAASC website at <http://asc.army.mil/portal.cfm>. A separate application must be provided for each opportunity (e.g., 12-24 semester hours of business, bachelor's degree, or master's degree). Questions on the ATAP announcement and the application process should be directed to the Acquisition Career Managers or the ATAP Coordinator. A list of Regional ACMs may be found at <http://asc.army.mil/contact/acms.cfm>.

(3) Funds required beyond the funding limits outlined within this document are the responsibility of the individual ATAP participant.

(4) Entitlements under other federal programs, such as veterans' educational benefits or the Army Civilian Training, Education and Development System (ACTEDS) program should be used prior to applying for tuition assistance under the ATAP.

(5) Attain a grade of at least a "B" in graduate courses and "C" in undergraduate courses.

(6) Upon acceptance into the program, all communications regarding ATAP issues should be directed to the National Capital Region (NCR) CSO.

(7) Provide final course grades to the NCR CSO ATAP Coordinator within 30 days of course completion. Failure to provide grade information may result in loss of future funding or removal from the program. Notify the NCR CSO ATAP Coordinator of completion of ATAP opportunity.

(8) Follow reimbursement procedures, as outlined in USC, Title 5, 4101-4118, to reimburse the government for classes with an incomplete grade, withdrawal, or grade below "B" in graduate courses and below "C" in undergraduate courses, or departure from federal government service. All reimbursements for ATAP will be completed through the USAASC Resource Management Office. Ensure DD Form 1556, Section E - Trainee Agreement/ Certification is read and understood. Submission of a DD Form 1556 constitutes acceptance of the Trainee Agreement/Certification in Section E of the DD Form 1556.

(9) Ensure that first-line supervisors are made aware of academic or other problems that might interfere with success in the educational process.

(10) Select courses from among approved program of study. When planned courses are canceled, conflict with other courses, or are unavailable, provide appropriate substitutes to the NCR CSO ATAP Coordinator prior to course commencement. Failure to provide appropriate substitutes prior to making changes to the course curriculum may result in the loss of future funding or removal from the program.

(11) Notify the NCR CSO ATAP Coordinator immediately when a change in employment no longer qualifies you for program participation or if acceptance into another training opportunity will interfere with ATAP participation.

(12) In coordination with your supervisor, develop a five-year Individual Development Plan (IDP) that lists all courses to be funded by ATAP. The IDP must be in an approved status and should include only current and projected courses. For each course, ATAP must be selected as the Planned Funding Source.

(13) Read and follow the information outlined in the ATAP Procedures.

(14) Sign and date the agreement to notify the USAASC of removal from a Federal Government position before payback time has been met. This reimbursement policy is located on the DD Form 1556, Section E – Training Agreement/ Certification, which must be read and signed by the applicant. Notify the NCR CSO ATAP Coordinator of any job change within the AL&T workforce and provide updated contact information.

(15) Ensure beginning dates for each course submitted on the DD Form 1556 matches exactly the dates identified by the college/university. Adjusting start dates may result in removal from the program. Ensure IDP is updated to reflect the same dates as the submitted Form 1556.

e. The Organization/Supervisor:

(1) Be aware of the individual's application for ATAP and ensure individual courses are included and approved on the IDP.

(2) Ensure the individual is available for school and not encumbered by excessive overtime or travel.

(3) Reimburse tuition and other funding provided if substantial travel, duties, or other training prohibits the student from successful completion of classes.

(4) Ensure that the NCR CSO ATAP Coordinator is notified immediately when a change in employment no longer qualifies the employee for program participation; sign the individual's agreement to notify the USAASC of removal from a Federal Government position before payback time has been completed.

6. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

a. Programs of Study. The ATAP program will support the following educational pursuits: 12-24 semester hours of business required for AAC membership (unless this was attained through previous college work); an associates or undergraduate degree for the AL&T workforce; or a graduate degree for those GS-12 (or equivalent) workforce members who meet their current position certification requirements (at least Level II). All degrees should follow the disciplines that underpin the functions of the AAC. Changes to the approved course of study must be coordinated with the NCR CSO ATAP Coordinator prior to funding approval for the new course.

b. Learning Institutions. ATAP funding will support educational pursuits through all schools and programs of study that are nationally or regionally accredited.

c. Academic Standards. Program participants must complete all courses with at least a grade of "B" in graduate courses and at least a "C" in undergraduate courses. Withdrawal from an ATAP-funded course will result in the employee being required to reimburse the government for all costs incurred with that particular course if the course has passed the drop deadline and costs have been incurred. Repeated withdrawals from ATAP-funded courses may result in the subsequent removal from ATAP.

d. Nontraditional Modes of Learning. ATAP will fund nontraditional modes of learning (courses via television, satellite, and on-line) when the courses are included in the program of study and are part of the school's alternate modes of training.

e. College-Level Examination Program/Defense Activity for Nontraditional Education Support (CLEP/DANTES) Tests. ATAP funding will be provided for CLEP/DANTES testing. A nonpassing grade on any test will require reimbursement by the individual. CLEP/DANTES funding limits will directly relate to the funding limits of the ATAP program the participant is enrolled in (undergraduate or graduate funding).

f. Electives. Electives required as part of a degree must underpin the functions

of the AL&T workforce. Electives that do not meet this requirement will not be funded by ATAP. Courses must underpin the AL&T workforce unless the specific class is an actual degree requirement. ATAP participants may be required to provide documentation of actual course requirements if the legitimacy of a course is questioned by USAASC. Direct any questions on electives to the NCR CSO.

g. Prerequisite Courses. ATAP will not fund prerequisite work. This includes any prerequisite course work that is required for admission into the ATAP-approved course of study, or prerequisite course work that is required to complete a degree program.

h. Payback. Payback of time for the ATAP opportunity is as stipulated on the DD Form 1556. If any ATAP participant voluntarily leaves the DoD and the Federal service before completion of the ATAP training, reimbursement of tuition fees will apply. See Section E – Trainee Agreement/Certification on the DD Form 1556 for additional information and clarification.

i. Attendance. Any ATAP participant not attending scheduled courses for a period of one semester (without prior coordination with the NCR CSO) may be removed from the ATAP and required to reapply.

7. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

a. Funding. Funding for the ATAP will be centrally managed for AL&T workforce employees. As resources permit, educational related expenses outlined below would be funded prior to class attendance. ATAP funds will not be provided as reimbursement for funds expended by the student or another organization.

(1) Funding for a master's degree or business hours at the master's level is limited to \$1750 per course. The maximum amount allowed per fiscal year is \$8750. Business hours at the master's level will adhere to these funding limits. Funding required above this limit is the responsibility of the ATAP participant. The above yearly funding limitation of \$8750 applies to all ATAP participants regardless of the number of courses taken.

(2) Funding for a bachelor's degree is limited to \$1250 per course. The maximum amount allowed per fiscal year is \$6250. Business hours at the bachelor's level will adhere to these funding limits. Funding above this limit is the responsibility of the ATAP participant. The above yearly funding limitation of \$6250 applies to all ATAP participants, regardless of the number of courses taken.

(3) Funding for books is limited to \$150 per course. Funding above this limit is the responsibility of the ATAP participant. Book costs and lab fees (if appropriate) may be included on a DD Form 1556 (provided the bookstore accepts it as a form of payment). If the bookstore does not accept a DD Form 1556 or if the required books are not available through the college bookstore, book reimbursement is

authorized using an SF 1034 (Public Voucher for Purchases and Services Other Than Personal), which must be submitted with a copy of the purchase receipt. SF 1034 submissions must also include an Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) form and a voided check if the participant has never received a direct deposit or payment from DFAS.

(4) Lab fees and technology fees required for course completion will be considered as part of the cost of the course and will be counted as part of the total yearly funding limits.

b. Registration fees, parking costs, travel expenses, entrance exams (e.g., SAT, GMAT, GRE), and all other expenses not listed in paragraph 6a are not funded by ATAP. These expenses are the responsibility of the ATAP participant.

c. Changes to pre-approved funding limits must be coordinated through the NCR CSO prior to submission of the DD Form 1556.

d. Current ATAP students may request additional funds or an extension to their ATAP funding without having to reapply to the ATAP. Participants should fill out the ATAP Funding Update Form (<http://asc.army.mil/programs/atap/docs.cfm>) and submit it to the NCR CSO ATAP Coordinator. Funding requests are not guaranteed and are up to the discretion of the NCR CSO. Coordination will be made with the respective Regional Director if a participant is denied additional funding. The ATAP Funding Update Form may only be used for one additional FY of funding. Participants will be notified in a timely matter if their request is approved or denied. Funding extensions only apply for the program for which a participant was originally accepted into the ATAP (i.e., students attending courses for a Bachelor's degree may not request additional funding toward a Master's Degree). Application to the ATAP is necessary to obtain funds for a higher degree than originally approved.

8. EFFECTIVE DATE, EXPIRATION DATE, AND IMPLEMENTATION

This policy is effective immediately and supersedes all previous ATAP policies. The DDACM may issue procedures as necessary to implement this directive.

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